

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

The claims have been amended to remove reference characters and to place them in compliance with U.S. practice. None of the claim amendments is considered as narrowing the claim scope in any fashion.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Lau et al. 5,873,906. Claims 3, 4, 9 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lau et al. 5,873,906. The Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

The present invention relates to a prosthesis having a very supple and reliable and which can, for example, very easily and in complete safety, be brought from a folded position, in which it can be implanted in an artery, into a deployed positioning of functioning in the artery and which can be kept in this deployed position in complete safety.

To this end, according to the present invention, the structure comprises at least one corrugated filament forming approximately annular units linked together, at least some corrugations of the corrugated filament of two respective adjacent units of the annular units being linked together by a plurality of linking means. This structure is noteworthy in that at least some of the linking means comprise links which are made as a rigid piece and which are provided with at least two loops joined together and in that, for

each of the links, each of the two loops of the link entraps, with some clearance, a respective one of the two corrugations which are to be linked together.

This structure provides advantages, as discussed at application page 3, line 34 - page 4, line 14, because each link has at least two loops, i.e., one loop per corrugation or part of filament to be linked, the parts of filament thus linked are independent of one another, thus improving the suppleness of the structure. This is achieved first by preventing these parts of filament from rubbing together and secondly, by separating from one another the two parts of the structure which are associated one with each of these two parts of filament.

In contrast, Lau discloses a stent which includes a structure comprising corrugations 104 which are linked together by flexible linkages 124. Linkage 124 of Lau's Fig. 3 (see col. 11, lines 18-24) is a flexible thread which is free to move away from the corrugations.

Accordingly, the linkage of Lau is not a rigid piece and does not have two rigid loops joined together. Thus, Lau differs from the present claimed invention in at least this significant respect.

For at least the above reasons, it is submitted that claims 1-14 are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by Lau et al. It is respectfully submitted that all objections and/or rejections are overcome and that all pending claims are directed to allowable subject matter. Thus, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

If any issues remain which may best be resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Date: November 1, 2001

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Exhibit I

1. (Amended) A structure of a prosthesis intended to be implanted in a human or animal passage to provide through-passage along said passage, said structure [(2)] comprising:

at least one mesh [(4)] which, at least in part, is approximately cylindrical and comprises at least one corrugated filament [(F)] forming approximately annular units [(UA)] linked together, at least some [of the] corrugations [(ON)] of said corrugated filament [(F)] of two respective adjacent units [(UA)] of said annular units being linked together by a plurality of linking means [(5)], wherein at least some of said linking means [(5)] comprise links [(6A, 6B, 6C)] which ^{each of the links} are made as a rigid piece and which are provided with at least two loops [(B1, B2)] joined together and, in the case of each of said links [(6A, 6B, 6C)], each of the two loops [(B1, B2)] of said link (6A, 6B, 6C) entraps, with some clearance [(J)], a respective one of [the] two of said corrugations [(ON)] which are to be linked together.

2. (Amended) The structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of said links [(6A)] comprises at least [:] a straight central portion [(7), and], wherein at each of the ends of said central portion [(7)], there is at least one portion [(8, 9)] in the shape of an arc of a circle intended to form at least part of [a loop (B1, B2) of the link (6A)] one of said loops.

3. (Amended) The structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of said links [(6B)] comprises at least [:] a central portion comprising two straight partial portions [(12, 13)] which are not aligned and which are connected together [, and], wherein at the free end of each of said partial portions [(12, 13)], there is at least one portion [(8, 9)] in the shape of an arc of a circle intended to form at least part of one [loop of the link (6B)] of said loops.

4. (Amended) The structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of said links [(6A, 6B)] has the overall shape of an S, defined in a single plane.

5. (Amended) The structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein, in the case of at least one of said links, one of the two loops [of said link] is defined in a first plane which differs from a second plane in which the other [loop of the link] of the two loops is defined.

6. (Amended) The structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one [(B2)] of the loops of at least one of said links [(6A)] is entirely closed.

7. (Amended) The structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one [(B1)] of the loops of at least one of said links [(6A)]

is partially closed so as to entrap the corrugation [(ON)] that is to be linked.

8. (Amended) The structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least some of said corrugations [(ON)] are zigzags.

9. (Amended) The structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein said mesh at least partially comprises hexagonal mesh openings [(M2)].

10. (Amended) The structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of said links [(6C)] is radio-opaque.

11. (Amended) The structure as claimed in claim 10 [and comprising] wherein said links comprise a number of radio-opaque links [(6C)] arranged longitudinally with respect to said cylindrical mesh [(4)].

12. (Amended) A prosthesis intended to be implanted in a human or animal passage to provide through-passage along said passage, and which comprises at least one structure [(2)] as specified in claim 1.

13. (Amended) The prosthesis as claimed in claim 12, and additionally comprising at least one impervious envelope [(3)] at least partially surrounding said structure [(2)].

14. (Amended) The prosthesis as claimed in claim 13, wherein
said impervious envelope [(3)] has a turned-back region at least at
one of the ends of said structure [(2)].